

**1. Winter Cold** Jan. 17 to Feb. 23. The coldest part of the 2007-2008 winter (ranked 21<sup>st</sup> coldest among 136 years of records). Actual temperatures bottomed out at -30F at Stanley on the morning of January 24 (lowest official reading in Iowa since -34 at Elkader on 12/25/2000). Wind Chill Index (WCI) fell to -45F at Spencer & Estherville on morning of Feb. 10 (lowest WCI since 1/10/1997). [note; 2/10/2008 WCI would have been -69F on old WCI in use prior to 2001).

**2. Heavy Snow** February. The statewide average of snowfall in February was 15.8 inches. This ties for 3<sup>rd</sup> highest February total among 121 years of data and 13<sup>th</sup> highest for any calendar month. Oskaloosa recorded 41.7 inches of snow for the month thanks largely to two big events (11.0" on Feb. 3 and 15.0" on Feb. 6-8). Seasonal snow totals reached record highs at several southern and eastern Iowa locations. Dubuque Lock & Dam reported the most snow for the winter season with 87.6 inches. Seasonal snowfall was actually below normal over parts of west central Iowa. The statewide average seasonal snowfall was 45.1 inches, 12.7 inches above normal, and ranks 10<sup>th</sup> highest of record (highest since 2000-2001).

**3. Dry March** March. Thankfully a period of drier than normal weather prevailed from Feb. 29 through Mar. 30 across Iowa. There were also no rapid warm-ups, thus deep moisture-rich snow pack melted fairly slowly and without substantial added rainfall.

**4. Very Wet April** April. The brief break in the wet weather pattern ended Mar. 31. Rainfall was frequent and plentiful through May 11. The statewide average April precipitation was the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest among 136 years of records (behind 1999). Several cities set April rainfall records including Fayette where 11.98 inches exceeded their previous April record of 8.02 inches set in 1909 among 119 years of record.

**5. Dry mid-May** May 11-22. A much needed break in the cool and wet spring season came in mid May when a statewide average of only 0.08 inches of rain fell from May 11<sup>th</sup> to the 22<sup>nd</sup>. This break allowed farmers to get much of their 2008 planting completed before very heavy rains returned.

**6. Parkersburg Tornado** May 25. What had been a very slow start to the Iowa severe weather season came to an abrupt and devastating end on the afternoon of May 25 when Iowa's first F5 tornado since 1976 swept through Parkersburg and adjacent areas causing eight fatalities and an estimated \$100 million in damage.

**7. Major Floods** Late May – Early June. An exceptionally wet 15 day period from May 29 to June 12 brought a statewide average of 9.03 inches of rain (normal 2.45 inches for the period). This was probably the wettest 15 days in state history and followed six months of unusually cold weather and an extended period of excessive precipitation dating back to August 2007. Record flooding resulted over much of eastern Iowa. Cedar Rapids was hardest hit with a June 13 crest on the Cedar River rising more than 11 feet higher than the previous record. Statewide flood damage has been estimated to be in the range of \$10 billion in 2008. The first one-half of 2008 was the wettest January to June period on record in Iowa and followed the second wettest August to December period of record in 2007.

**8. Little Sioux Tornado** June 11. A F3 tornado struck the Little Sioux Scout Ranch in west central Iowa on the evening of June 11 killing four Boy Scouts. This was one of 46 tornadoes recorded in Iowa during the month and pushed the statewide tornado fatality toll to its highest annual level since 1968. Severe storms were reported from all of Iowa's 99 counties during June with the exception of Audubon County.

**9. More Heavy Rain** July Rainfall amounts returned to more seasonable levels in July with the exception of south central Iowa where torrential rains on the 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> brought major flooding, but on a much more limited geographic scale than seen earlier in the summer.

**10. A Dry August** August. Nearly all of Iowa enjoyed a drier than normal August. Parts of western and northern Iowa were in need of rainfall with Creston recording a record dry August (only 0.36 inches, previous record 0.46" in 1984 among 107 years or record).

**11. A Little Heat** August 3. Hawarden recorded the only official 100F reading of the year on August 3 while the heat index reached 112 on August 4 at Burlington. Overall there were very few hot days in 2008. Many locations across northeastern Iowa never reached 90 degrees during the year. While summertime temperatures averaged only 42nd lowest among 136 years of records there were few extremes of heat. Statewide there was an average of only 5 days with temperatures reaching 90 degrees. Only 1915 and 1992 saw fewer hot days than in 2008.

**12. Late Fall Freeze** Sep-Oct. Sibley recorded the first 32F reading of the fall on the morning of Sep. 15. A few northeastern Iowa locations recorded a hard freeze on Oct. 4 and Oct. 18; however, most of northern and western Iowa avoided a killing freeze until the unusually late date of Oct. 21 while southeastern Iowa did not have a hard freeze until Oct. 28. This late end to the growing season was extremely welcome as crops were late to mature owing to delayed planting and/or excessive wetness. Growing season temperatures averaged very close to normal from June through October, unlike in the 1993 flood year when very cool weather persisted through the entire growing season and greatly reduced crop yields.

**13. Mild Early November** Nov. 2 - Nov. 5. Temperatures soared far above normal for the first five days of November with much of the state reaching the 70's. Sioux City recorded the highest temperature with 80F on Nov. 3.

**14. Cold Late Year** Nov. 7-Dec. 25. Temperatures averaged below normal on 35 days out of this 49 day period. Spencer Airport recorded the first subzero reading of the fall on Nov. 21. Cresco recorded the lowest temperature with -22F on December 22. Estherville and Iowa Falls reported the lowest wind chill indices with -39F readings on the morning of Dec. 21.

**15. Lots of Snow** December. The 2008-2009 snowfall season got off to a fairly slow start in October and November but made up for lost time in late November. The first widespread snow event of the season arrived on Nov. 29-30 at the end of the Thanksgiving holiday weekend. Light to moderate snowfall events crossed the state an average of every other day from Dec. 3 to Dec. 25. The largest of these events came on Dec. 18-19 when 6 to 12 inches of snow fell across much of northern Iowa while freezing rain and sleet fell over southern Iowa. December snowfall has averaged 15.6 inches through the 26<sup>th</sup>. This ranks 5<sup>th</sup> highest for December among 122 years of snow records. Snow has been especially heavy across the northern one-third of the state where monthly totals in excess of twenty inches are common.